Lt. FRANK W. LOOPS, 0-667527
B.T.C., A.P.O. 525
c/o Postmaster, N.Y.C.

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Air Mail

Mr. & Mrs. Charles E. Loops
5418-13th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C.
U.S.A.

Censored by:
F.W.Loops

Bomb. Training Center - A.P.O. 525
% Postmaster, N.Y.C.
Wednesday - May 12, 1943

Hello Folks,

and Ma in particular! - being as how Sunday past was "Mother's Day" and I could do nothing about it. - Oh well, - my thoughts were there - you know - so maybe by next time things will be so we can be at least in communications. Did you have a nice day? - From the way fellows here tell me the mail goes, - maybe I should take this opportunity to express my greetings for your 40th anniversary! - The one on the 24th of June! - But no, - I won't. - I'll wait until my next letter or so and then I'll know I'll have something to write about, - so there! -

I get into town pretty often here - a big city in these parts - but still nothing. - We are here to have our plane worked on, supposedly - but they are so over-rushed we just sit. - In lots of ways it's fun - cause we know it will be our last "vacation" for some time - but it's getting sorta tiresome, - even for me! - Think we would all feel better with something to do.

I'm afraid I'd never get used to living in this part of the world. - I get so tickled over the people and customs - but guess I'd soon get to the point of not noticing most things. - The women around here (native women - not the Europeans that sought refuge here, I mean) all wear bundles of clothing - (you can't help but wonder how they get about) and a veal of over their faces. - Really it's more than a veil - their whole face is covered up - except for a peep hole for one eye -! - Honestly, you see this big bundle of sheets walking around the street - and when you get up to it - all you can see is a hole about an inch in diameter with part of the one eye showing! - It almost gives you the urge to sneak up out of their range of vision (which can't be much) - get real close to 'em and peak right back thru the same little hole and say "Boo" at the same time! -

And then again, - sometimes, - you see some of the women without the veil - and you've never seen such ugly mugs in all

your life. - Hollywood certainly has done a good job of glamorizing nothing!. Don't know just why or when the veil should be worn - used to think the unmarried ones did - and the married ones didn't - but don't believe that's so. - Oh, - another thing - among the natives - you very seldom see a man + his wife walking along together - the wife is about one step behind and to one side - and quiet! (Maybe they have something, there?)

And now - we come to the more risqué type of north African woman - one who has shed her native dress for the European dress - and ye gods, - what a mess! - You should see one. - You sorta swallow real hard and say in a stern voice, "stay down, stomach". - Yep, - they're that bad. - To start with - their hair - a little on the kinky side, - is usually died - and how each head of hair manages to have so many different variations of color is something I'll never know! - And their faces - are usually made up, with what a man, - and a layman at that - would take to be ~~flo~~ flour paste! -

We do have a few who are refugees that are right pretty, tho, - and of course - our own nurses - who speak our own language - and dress the way we like to see 'em. - They are strickly glamour girls over here - and lots of fun -

We have a red cross bldg. - in fact several - but one just for the officers and nurses (who are all officers, too). - It's the first of any of the organizations we've run into, - and believe me they're doing a good job of it. - and a mighty welcome sight. - They serve us sandwiches - coffee, fruit juices, - have a reading room with a fair library, - and usually arrange for some sort of mass entertainment at nights. - The dollars I used to begrudge sometimes - I wish had been more now!

You will like my really first encounter, in a business way - with the French here! - (I can guess at some of the ~~wo~~ written French, - but the spoken word - well, you might just as well save your breath!) I bought a couple of "open neck" khaki shirts from the Quatermaster at one of our stops - but being regular

enlisted man's stuff. - they needed "shoulder straps" before an officer could wear them. - Well. - my sewing isn't quite up to that. - I can repair - but not make over. - As most posts have someone who styles himself a tailor - I thought I could have it done sometime when I got settled - but the further we go on - the rougher it gets - so says Frankie - "I'd better have a go with these Frenchmen and get this stuff sewed!" - Sooooo --- yesterday I make my way to town with my shirts under my arm - I find a sign that looks like it says "tailor" - take a deep breath - open the door + walk in! Sure enough it's a tailor shop - I try to tell them what I want - in English - and they tried to guess in French. - Oh, - a great time! - After awhile - I got smart - took off my jacket - pointed to the straps on the shirt I had on and motioned at the shoulders of the other shirts! - Well, - I think they got the idea - or at least I hope so. - For after looking at the shirts a minute - they unfolded one - motioned to the shirt tail - made motions as to cutting some of it off - and then motioned back at the shoulders! - I took this to mean they would cut some of the tails off to use for the straps - so I left the shirts there. - I'm to collect them tomorrow at 5 o'clock - so I'm sorta interested to see the outcome. - Maybe I will have my shoulders down where my shirt tails were! - after all - the most I can lose is two shirts - and I'm having that much fun out of it!

How are the luxuries at home? - We get everything over here - and I mean everything. - If we happen to be staying at a French Garrison, as we sometimes do. (one that used to belong to the Vichy France that we had to take by force + etc) we usually have nice iron beds. - And by iron - I mean iron even to the slats - (They have no springs). - we fill a mattress cover with straw - spread our blankets - and there we are. If we are staying at one of our places (I mean a place where we've, the U.S. - has thrown up a camp) our quarters are usually

right on the ground in our bedding rolls. - Our lights, if any, are candles - and of course - our meals are served "a la mess-kit". - They are small items, tho. - As long as we can keep well, - we should worry. - Of course, sometimes we fuss + fume about everything - but the old saying is that that is what makes a happy Army. - Maybe, - I'm not talking, myself!

Haven't found out anything further about an A.P.O. - other than what I wrote you in my V mail letter. - From what others have told me, tho, - we have all given up any real expectations of receiving mail for some time to come. - I saved the letters I got while at Morrison Field - Those forwarded from Avon Park. - Usually, when one is on the move so much, and got as many letters as I did, - well, - there's no alternative 'cept to destroy them as you get them - but I had a sneaking suspicion when I saved these last ones - that letters reread are better than none at all. - Haven't had to resort to that (rereading, yet.) but I have them just in case!

Well, - guess I'd better stop this rambling along. - I have a hard time trying to think of something to say that won't be censored out, - so maybe, if you don't mind the "Cook's Tour" - I'll be seeing you again - or talking to you again. - I've been looking all over town for some knick knacks to buy + send home to you, - but all you see is junk, prepared especially for the Americans, and the prices are 2 or 3 times what they should be. - In lots of ways they are taking all sorts of advantages of the American Soldiers - who in most cases, don't stop to realize these people over here are seeing more money than they even knew existed before. - Oh, - well, - why worry? - Bye for now and I'll write some more after you've recouperated from this particular digression!

Love, Frank

P.S.:-

Forgot to tell you - John Freeman - one of the old gang from Basic & Lubbock - is still with me! - We are the only two of the whole bunch who are still together. - He is the one who called me when I was home last December if you will remember. - As I started to say - His father is stationed here, in the Navy - so you can imagine the time he's having! -

John has a girl, - I suppose they're engaged - or on the verge of it - I don't know - who works for the F.B.I. in Washington. he said he is going to write her - giving her your address so that she will have some place to go if she wants to. - Her name is ~~Elean~~ Eleanor Gage, - 649 E Capitol - , just in case she might ever call, - you will know who she is. - Her home is in Rochester, N.Y. - and at present rooms somewhere on East Capitol St..

FWL